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## Teaching 'LSRW Skills' Through Literature

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### **Abstract:**

This paper examines and analyzes the extent and significance of English language teaching via literature and the role of English teachers in molding students' character. It also discusses "the benefits that a language learner can derive from including literature in the educational curriculum for language learning." The general goal is the recent use of literature as a resource for English language education. Alan Maley, author of many titles, uses literature merely as a language resource. It is a brief description of some valuable examples and some tips for novice teachers.

**Keywords:** Importance of teaching ELT, benefits of ELT, language through literature, tips for novice teachers.

### **Introduction:**

Acquiring English language skills is critical to shaping every student's future. The quality of education and the teacher's integrity are essential in developing a student's character. Education that fails to prepare students for a prosperous future is futile. The significance of teaching the English language emerged due to significant events in the 16th century. The diverse styles of the English language used by

various authors and writers in literature aim to ignite a reader's passion. Incorporating the English language at the school level aims to equip citizens with the essential skills to succeed in a competitive world. Upon more intimate examination, it becomes evident that the English curriculum in schools and colleges emphasizes literature more than grammar. While grammar imparts the rules of language usage, literature focuses on enhancing communication skills and vocabulary acquisition.

### **Literature enhances language skills:**

Literature can expose students to colloquial language, in which learners can adapt and adopt the terms and use the expressions in specific contexts. Novels of more complex language types, contents, and topics can be used in progressive language classrooms to give students more complex language direction. This, therefore, is predicted to enhance students' language experience, affecting their language competence. (A. Maley-1989)

The use of literature as a resource to develop linguistic competence has gained increasing recognition in recent times. This method views literature not only as an object of literary analysis but also as a medium for language acquisition purposes. The idea is to use literature to develop language talents, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, in a more exciting and contextually rich manner.

This approach has been gaining traction in language education, and several books have been published recently on this topic. (Brumfit and Cárter *Literature and Language Teaching*, Collie and Slater, *Literature in the Language Classroom*). These books explore the use of literature in greater detail and provide practical guidance on how to incorporate literature into language instruction. They highlight the benefits of using literature, such as increased motivation, enhanced critical thinking, and improved language proficiency. Furthermore, they also provide insights into the selection of appropriate literary texts, the development of lesson plans, and the assessment of student learning outcomes. In the past, the idea that literature, particularly prose texts, could be utilized for linguistic purposes was often associated with academic analysis, as the two were

considered inseparable. This meant that language learners were required to read and analyze literary works in order to gain a better understanding of the language. This approach was commonly used in foreign language textbooks, usually including non-simplified literary selections. These were often seen as a way to expose students to authentic language and encourage them to use it in context. However, the downside of this approach was that it could be intimidating for some students, who might struggle to understand the literary works and their language.

Students were sometimes required to read and analyze entire literary works, such as novels or plays. While this approach could benefit language acquisition, it could also be time-consuming and challenging for some students. Despite these challenges, literature for language learning purposes remains popular today. However, there is now a greater emphasis on selecting simplified literary works that are more accessible to language learners and using various other materials and activities to support language acquisition. For example, this practice has been the rule in Great Britain in the case of the A-level foreign language exam. The current sensation of the first students to take this exam since the implantation of the GCSE examinations has been attributed to the «less focus on literary studies» contained in the new A-level syllabuses (Ward 22). In strict EFL situations, one of the most potent factors that have ended this trend, and with the «sacrosanct» treatment of literature, was the general use of simplified readers. The first simplified texts were published in the forties and fifties, primarily based on famous novels or reports, the underlying premise being that if the story itself were demanding enough for the student, the book would make a good source of vocabulary and linguistic information. Still today, second language researchers advocate the use of simplified texts because (1) their streamlined register can be tuned to the plain English of the student so that the text evolves a basis of comprehensible input, and (2) if the levels are pretty sufficiently, the act of reading becomes enjoyable and the student will be likely to read more and, thus, get much more input on his own, in a relaxed and anxiety-free position very favorable for the purchase of a foreign language (Krashen 38). Simplified readers have become an

established «supplementary activity» at all levels, in which the undisputed literary origin of many no longer implies any «literary» approach. Many of them are not even adaptations of Literary works. They have been reported on purpose to be just what they are by experienced authors, some of whose names (Norman Whitney, L G. Alexander, Peter Viney, and others) are usually associated with some other elements within the EFL busy publishing market.

As English literature professors working in colleges with non-native students, we have observed that the interaction between language and literature is constantly present, even if it is often unconscious. We have noticed that students need sufficient comprehension, and fluency often necessitates using activities such as proof, paraphrasing, retelling, or translation to enhance their language skills. These activities not only help students to understand the literature better but also provide an opportunity for them to practice their language skills. In the case of exams or written assignments, we have found that poor language quality can distort the content or prevent students from conveying it properly, often resulting in marks deductions. Therefore, students must develop strong language skills to express themselves accurately and effectively. When we use English in our lessons, our students assume that the literature class is not only about the literature but also an opportunity to improve their language skills. This is because literature is a "sheltered" class that provides a definite context in which the four language skills can be practiced.

Furthermore, literature provides a rich source of vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions that can be used to enrich students' language skills. Despite the importance of language learning in literature classes, meaningful language exchange may only sometimes happen in a proper language class, where the mark language is the object of explanation. Finding opportunities and topics to talk about or discuss in English can be challenging. Literature classes, however, provide a perfect opportunity for students to engage in meaningful language exchange as they discuss and analyze literary texts. Language and literature are inextricably intertwined, and students' ability to understand and express themselves accurately and effectively is critical to their success. As teachers, we must continue

to find ways to create meaningful language exchange opportunities for our students, especially in literature classes, where students can expand their language skills while studying the rich world of literature.

It is worth considering the use of literature to promote language acquisition. In foreign language studies, literature teaching is essential to any subject taught in that foreign language. It is an unavoidable corollary of the process. This is particularly true in universities, and both language and literature teachers should take note of its implications. However, it is essential to appreciate the power of literature to improve linguistic competence, as mentioned in option 3. Reading, in general, is a beautiful source of input. It is an essential activity recommended at all learning levels since it provides ample opportunities to learn new words and gain language awareness.

Moreover, literature could be a highly effective language teaching method. It can be used to help learners expand their language skills in a more immersive and engaging manner. Learners can enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension talents by reading literature in the mark language. They can also acquire wisdom in the culture and society of the language they are studying. Thus, the use of literature in foreign language studies should be given due attention. It is a vital instrument that can enhance language acquisition and provide learners with a more immersive and engaging learning experience. Both language and literature teachers should explore its potential and consider how it can be incorporated into their teaching methodologies. The «reconstructive» strategy of language teaching, very newly saved from oblivion by Waldemar Marión, is based on the reconstructive or modeling principle, which includes memorizing texts, retranslation and reinterpretation, and substitution and extension of the original sentences, all of their activities that are feasible using, for instance, short stories (57-81). The process successfully introduces foreign languages to adults in Eastern European countries.

On the other hand, research has shown that task input is paramount to obtaining competence in writing. Writing practice and instruction by themselves will not help authors develop the code. There is printed evidence for this in the case of the aboriginal language, and one might expect a similar relationship between reading

and writing in a second language (Krashen 38).

However, why use Literary texts (novels, short stories) instead of other written material? Experts in this field have put forward some reasons. William Littlewood, among others, argues that literature is a perfect vehicle for learning differences between language varieties and a foreign culture (181). Another benefit is that books create subject matter and provide «contení» material that can be cataloged as «authentic» even though it does not reflect direct experience. Finally, perhaps the most critical aspect is that literature has suggestive power and enough ambiguity to start discussions and student opinion exchanges. This final benefit is highly regarded in the language education field nowadays, given the absence of options that a foreign language instructor has to carry out simple or meaningful speech interaction between students and teacher or among the students themselves in such an incredibly conventional place as the classroom. Other advantages include the opportunity to utilize «localized literature,» that is, literature that contains content, settings, cultural assumptions, situations, etc, that are familiar to the second-language

Readers should take advantage of their previous background knowledge or «schemata» (Brock 22-26), which are irrelevant at the university level. However, they must be considered at other stages. However, it hardly seems necessary to note that not every literary text suits this activity. In this respect, Brumfit and Cárter claim that «there is no such thing as literary language» because no single or particular language property is exclusive to a literary work (25). This power is inevitable, but even they realize that language is sometimes employed in courses that can be distinguished as literary. It would not be very sensible to use in a classroom, setting aside its distinctive academic condition. The first hypothesis is that texts planned for language goals should be carefully chosen by criteria of «interest» rather than «literariness.» Short and Candlin propose two other criteria for this selection: that texts should have (1) a density of meaning and (2) a high degree of inferability (109). What is, of course, also necessary is a well-read teacher with sensibility and experience, in other words, with knowledge of an ample body of literary works and their students' interests and expectations.

Utilizing various teaching methods in the classroom has always presented a challenge, leading teachers and students to think creatively and practically. This policy permits teachers to cater to their students' needs and interests. Through teaching English language and literature, an English teacher can impart quality education among students, as many literary works in English, particularly poetry and drama, explore the nature and humanity of different characters. These characters exhibit unique traits within the story's context, allowing a teacher to identify the differences between good and evil. By teaching literature, a teacher can help students understand that good behavior is rewarded while evil is punished. Additionally, language is a tool that can be used to build or destroy relationships.

Traditionally, language teachers who use literature as a teaching tool focus on lecturing about themes, characters, diction, symbolism, summary, plot, motifs, and other related topics. However, they tend to neglect the stylistic and linguistic aspects of the literary texts. While it is vital to teach literature, it should also be done in a way that creates an awareness of linguistic possibilities and sensibility. This approach makes the idea of literature through language relevant. To achieve this, teachers should encourage students to read and explore a wide range of academic books to help them understand and develop intellectual behavior toward the characters narrated by authors whose lives and attitudes differ from theirs. Through close examination of contemporary works in English, students learn to observe, describe, and analyze the subject based on the situation, which helps to develop creative thinking and writing skills. In teaching language through literature, the teacher's primary goal should not be to teach about the language but to develop learners' abilities to use the language for various communicative intentions. There is a difference between teaching around the language and speaking in the language, which can be developed through dialogues in drama, verbal and nonverbal communication, short stories, narrations, conversations, and interviews. Teachers can follow the following steps to teach language through literature and enhance students' Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) skills.

Teachers could ask students to repeatedly listen to a recorded

lecture and write down any new words used to improve listening and vocabulary skills.

Another way to enhance speaking skills is to assign a paragraph from a prescribed text and have students give a brief lecture on the topic.

For reading skills, teachers could ask students to read a text aloud on stage, using skimming and scanning techniques.

Finally, assigning a paragraph and asking students to identify two literary words and look up their meanings in a dictionary can improve word power and writing skills.

English teachers should prioritize helping their students develop communicative competence beyond mastering the language's structure and form. It includes the ability to comprehend discourse in its social and cultural context. Using literature in the EFL classroom can be a highly effective tool for students' linguistic development and accuracy. Even so, EFL speakers still need help understanding the nuances, creativity, and versatility of even standard and transactional forms of English section forms.

## **Conclusion**

The English language's dominance worldwide has made it crucial for individuals to learn it as a second language, especially in countries where non-native speakers reside. Despite the widespread need for English language education, teaching and learning English can be challenging for teachers and students. One of the reasons for this is that English is a complex language with diverse grammar rules and numerous literary devices that can be challenging to master. Regrettably, many language learners tend to focus only on mastering the grammar aspect of the language while ignoring the importance of literature. Literature can help learners improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking aptitudes, which are crucial elements of language learning. Learners can better understand the language's nuances and complexities by analyzing literature. Moreover, literature provides a unique insight into the culture and society of English-speaking countries, exposing learners to different perspectives and ways of thinking. By reading literature, language learners can also expand their language and create a better experience of sentence structures, idioms,



and figurative language.

This paper has highlighted the significance of literature in teaching English, emphasizing the importance of incorporating literary texts into language learning. The paper provides valuable insights into how a teacher can make literature an integral part of their language curriculum, helping learners develop a deeper understanding of the English language.

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